

What I Claim Is:

1. A knife, comprising:

a handle;

5 a blade movably secured to the handle so that the blade is  
movable along a path of travel between a closed position and an  
open position;

a latch member movable between a locked position in which it  
extends into the path of travel of a portion of the blade thereby  
preventing movement of the blade and an unlocked position in  
10 which it does not interfere with movement of the blade;

a gas spring positioned to bias the latch member into the  
locked position, the gas spring comprising a movable wall that  
partially defines a substantially sealed, variable volume chamber  
containing a gas; and

15 wherein movement of the latch member from the locked  
position to the unlocked position causes the movable wall to  
reduce the volume of the chamber, thereby compressing the gas to  
create spring force against the latch member.

2. A folding knife, comprising:

20 a handle having a pivot shaft;

a blade movably secured to the handle so that the blade is  
pivotable about the pivot shaft along a path of travel between a  
closed position and an open position;

a latch member movable between a locked position in which it extends into the path of travel of a portion of the blade thereby preventing pivotal movement of the blade and an unlocked position in which it does not interfere with pivotal movement of the  
5 blade;

a gas spring positioned to bias the latch member into the locked position, the gas spring comprising a movable wall that partially defines a substantially sealed, variable volume chamber containing a gas; and

10 wherein movement of the latch member from the locked position to the unlocked position causes the movable wall to reduce the volume of the chamber, thereby compressing the gas to create spring force against the latch member.